

A  
LETTER

FROM A

*PRESBYTERIAN* in  
DUBLIN to his Friend in SCOTLAND.



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DUBLIN:

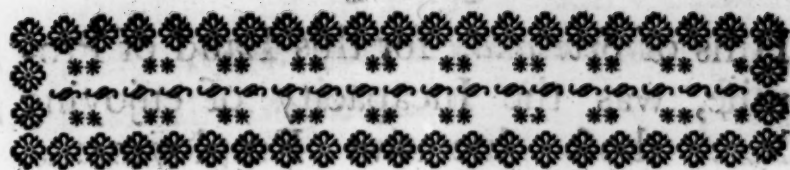
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SCOTLAND

DUPLICATE

Printed in the Town of London



A

# LETTER

FROM A

PRESBYTERIAN, &c.

DEAR SIR,

I Have the Pleasure to assure you, that our Case is not so desperate, as you and your Friends imagine. Matters were not ripe last Session. To make the Blow sure, certain previous Steps must be taken. What could not be done at once, we are in good Hopes of doing by Degrees. The only Reason which hath detained you, and many more, from quitting those barren Hills

Hills of *Scotland*, for this Land of Promise, was the Incapacity of enjoying here those lucrative Employments, which are open to you in your own Country. And the only Bar to this was the Test-Act. And the only Obstacle to repealing this Act was the Number of our Parliament-men, whose Sons, Brothers, Nephews and other Relations either actually had, or were likely to have, Possessions in the Church.

This, it must be owned hath been always a great Convenience to many Families, as yielding a handsome Provision for younger Brothers. And, therefore, so long as the Case stood thus, there was little Hope of repealing the Test. But our judicious Friends have thought of a Method, for reducing the established Clergy, to so low an Ebb of Fortune and Credit, as to remove this Obstacle, wisely judging that if Gentlemen should think it not worth while, to breed up their Children for Preferments in the Church, they would be less solicitous to preserve





preserve that, in the Preservation where-  
of neither themselves nor their Families,  
were at all interested.

Accordingly, it is proposed by repeated Attempts in Parliament, gradually to bring about the fore-mentioned Design, under Cover of various Projects for the Public Good, which can never so well be carried on, as by sacrificing the Rights of Ecclesiastics, whose scandalous, mad and foolish Notions about high Church would always keep this Country from thriving. But, thanks to the Virtue of divers sober-minded and serious Christians, our very good Friends, there are now two Projects on foot which it is conceived, may not a little forward our prudent and godly Purpose.

You must know then, that the Point in view is so to order Matters, that the good of the Nation and that of the established Church may be put in two opposite Scales; by which Means, as  
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the former riseth, the latter must sink, which will soon reduce the Clergy below Par. It is agreed on all Hands, the encouragment of Hemp and Flax would be a public Benefit. And it is said with good Colour, that if the Clergy were obliged to recede from their Tythes of these Products, it must be a great encouragment thereto. And we all very well know, that if both Landlord and Tenant thrive by this gainful Business, while the Parson doth not thrive in Proportion, he must upon the whole lose or sink with respect to his Neighbours. This Affair we have now on the Anvil.

We do also further consider, that Corn wants Encouragment as much as Flax or Hemp, and that it would greatly encourage a most necessary Branch of the national Produce, if the Clergy would but abate of their Tythes with regard to this also. The same Reason from the public Good holds here just as well, the two Cases being exactly parallel



rallel. And can you doubt then, if we carry one Point, that we shall not be able to carry the other also?

It will possibly be apprehended, that some malignant Priest-ridden Member may start up in the House, and extend this Way of reasoning to the Landlords themselves, alledging that they likewise ought to share in the Honour of promoting the public Good, and that it would greatly encourage the raising Hemp and Flax, if Landlords were restrained from raising their Rents, in Proportion as those Improvements filled their Estates with Tenants and Wealth; which Proposal may knock all on the Head. But we shall be easy as to this Apprehension, if we do but consider the Difference there is between the Clergy and Laiety of this Kingdom.

Of all Fools is there any Body Fool enough to think, at this time of Day, that a High-Church Parson should be treated on the Foot of a Country Gentleman

tleman, with respect to Rights, Privileges, and Property? Believe me the Men of that Cloth had better bear their Load patiently. Our Friends have long since considered them as a separate Body, who are not intitled to the common Rights of other Subjects. In Proof of this be pleased to reflect, that in a Dispute about Property with any other Man, you would immediately have recourse to Law. But this is not the Method to be taken with Clergymen, who are supposed not to have the Benefit of the Law, it being found, with respect to their Claims, a ready Expedient to stop the usual Course of Law by Petition, of which I could give you a fresh Instance. In short, all serious People are agreed, that every one but a Parson should have what the Law gives him.

As to the above-mentioned Affair which is now depending, to open your Eyes still more, and thoroughly to convince you the Hemp is not at Bottom  
what

what is meant by it, you must know there is no Man of Sense but sees clearly, that neither Hemp nor Flax nor any one but the Landlord (who will raise his Rent in Proportion) is to be gainer by what the Parson loseth.

I have told you of one Project and its Consequences: I will now tell you of another tending to the same End. Money, you know, at different Times hath a different Value, the Quantity, as more is dug from the Mine, still lessening the Price of Gold and Silver. Hence forty Pounds *per Annum*, which, some Ages ago, was the Lord Chancellor's Income, doth in this Age barely subsist a Curate. You well comprehend that, as Money grows plenty, Lands must rise in their Rent. Accordingly Rents are so much risen, that if Bishop's Lands had been singled out, and fixed at the Rents they yielded some Centuries ago, their Lordships would not have had at this Day the Wage: they  
give

give their Coachmen. A thousand Pities this good Work was not then thought of! But better late than never.

For bringing this about, we have an effectual Scheme on foot, to wit, the enabling Bishops and all other Ecclesiastics to make Leases of Lives renewable for ever. No Bishop can hope to outlive a Lease of Lives, he must therefore be obliged to renew on any Terms. Hence though Money should grow ever so plenty, by the opening of new Mines, or by the Increase of Trade, Industry and Credit, the succeeding Bishops must still abide by the old Rents. By which Means, the greatest Prelates in the Kingdom will infallibly be reduced to the size of Parish Clerks. I do not mean the present Bishops but their Successors. For, no doubt, the present Set will raise to themselves a noble Harvest from this Project, which indeed is no better than a Bribe to induce them to give into Measures, which all Men  
must

must see will ruin what they call the Church.

This must render the whole Bench odious to all such of the inferior Clergy, as have any Hopes of rising, who will look on themselves as defrauded by the right reverend Guardians of their Church, at the same Time that it must render them contemptible to all other Men. In short, a better Expedient could not have been thought of, for entailing Hatred and Contempt on the present Set of Bishops, as well as Poverty on their Successors.

You see what a prosperous Way our Affairs are in. After what I have said, I need not tell you that it is high Time to look about, and to improve your Interest with my Lord—— I long to see you Collector of—— in my Neighbourhood. Pray remember me to my Cousin *James MacCrackan*, also to *Duncan Douglas* of *Auchtermuchty*, not forgetting honest *Sawney*



[ 14 ]

*Sawney Blair* of *Blaes*, and let them know what Hopes I have of seeing them all in good Posts on this Side the Water.



*I am Yours, &c.*

E. E.

*FINIS.*